

SMOKE



EDITOR

SUSANNA VALENTINE MITCHELL

ASSISTANT EDITORS

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

EDWARD NORTH ROBINSON

Providence, Rhode Island

Wm. R. Brown Co., Printers
33 Eddy St., Providence, R. I.

S M O K E

Agenda

Whipped creams and the Blue Danube,
The lin-lan-lone of Babson,
And yet the damned thing doesn't come right.

Boston should be in the keys
Painting the saints among palms.
Charleston should be New York.

And what a good thing it would be
If Shasta roared up in Nassau,
Cooling the sugary air.

Perhaps if the orchestras stood on their heads
And dancers danced ballets on top of their beds—
We haven't tried that.

Those early centuries were full
Of very haphazard people and things,
The whole of them turning black;

Yet in trees round the College of Heralds,
No doubt, the well-tuned birds are singing,
Slowly and sweetly.

WALLACE STEVENS

Thousands Of Days

Morning cried by the bed:
at Seven, I understood—
by Eight, I was very God,
happiness in my head.

At Nine, I went to work,
and all the machines spoke:
Quiet there! Don't talk,
make, break and make!

At Ten, I opened my book
and all that hour I read
'The tallest men are dead,
their graveyard's in your look . . .'

I rose, angered, through sky
in a plane of glass,
dreaming speed, I pass
very bright, very high.

As it went up toward Noon
I heard the sun scream:
fly, suck your yellow dream,
we'll end it soon.

I fell all through One,
howling and threatening,
until at Two I sing
of a far reunion:

On Three the masses spread,
a fist opening bare,
a great hand in the square
to vindicate the dead.

S M O K E

By Four the men had gone,
the land was wet with rain
and a fountain stood up plain
on every lawn.

The clock picked at Five,
those jets turned silver then
with the lovely words of men
who wrote and remained alive,

prophesying the night
of Six, and the dawn behind;
but, creeping down the wind,
Seven snatched all the light.

Now am I left alone
waiting for day—
sometimes I turn away,
sometimes I sleep like stone.

Midnight is on my heels,
death bites about my legs.
While all my courage sags
the endless night wheels,

danger yells, and with
this blackness comes
back confidence, and blooms
in song and act and myth.

Call off your black dog, death,
it cannot bark me down—
I'll travel past these wounds
and speak another breath!

MURIEL RUKEYSER

For The Man On Horseback

you sit in your fetlocked bravery
(black-caped)

and the hanging husk of your armor
god saving the nation

your arm at halfmast
saluting the ribbon you strung on a staff
the man of the hour

(man has only an hour)

planes scream down the sky on your ears
and guns on their carts shining with polish
the rigid flood of men rolling the streets
let the sun look

and the stars
and the plush heavens

(these will be shrouds)

and the voice of the hybrid clergy
and the little white skulls of the shell-mown
piled at the doors of your palace
and the jets of blood from the geyser-vents
in the war-split hearts

these are the fruits
you will taste on your breakfast plate
and many-times-fractured skeletons
will sit on iron settees

and talk with you

your stallion stands with lover's intent
mated to battle

with the curve of his throat
arched to the thrust of your jaw

your heart

S M O K E

pumps-up under the load of your medals
let the world look

and the gods
the god
and all the less meaty ones

you are the would-be maker of matrix
for the unit mold of the masses
the brigades

that throttle the infant voice
when first it cries for a taste of its fate
have sprung from your words
and in the scum of the tainted waters
with which you have swamped the land
festers the insect terror

you are the man
of the hour
man has only an hour
and the faucet that drips off the minutes
drips dry

yet praises to you sometimes
for you are a breeder of thinkers
who hate you
and in the heat of their hate find answers
your arithmetic never could total
for the sum

of the whole is the whole
not you and a horse

LAWRENCE A. HARPER

Ode On A Familiar Theme

- I Call back, invocator, to wandered minds,
 arboreal twilights on those blossomed lawns
 where dairy grooms in gross effulgence watch
 the coppered apple on the catalyst bough.

Expunge the russet from that natural gloom
in which the blandished heart, multiply,
was lost: with clovered grasses now confused:
the fragrant mowings on the cud-spewed straw.

- II —Rara avis, literary rose:
 a marjoram among the lyme-grass strives
 to osculate a downward-thrusting bloom,
 a fervent miracle, but gauchely masqued.

That best-remembered passion to invoke
which simulated here so lovingly
a simple heart, complexly lost, is clear
most in confusion, least in memory.

- III A mind that suckled at a paper rose
 bright amethyst decreed, a keener mind
 first to betray the miserecordian fraud:
 now each profusion represents a fear.

And, greatest fear being fear incalculable,
the fear of God, a faulty logic sees
precision in obliquity: in fogs
and shades I see a lusher, longer grass

than any in the sun, and so commend
those amorous lawns the twilit lilac fools
upon, those orchards, aspirate in vaguest
blossoms that could bray the jackass deaf.

S M O K E

Anna's Respectful Guidance

When to sweet music counter drownèd tones
pictorial excellence no longer weighs.

But blissful vegetables and salad greens
are bland romantics in such garden shade!

Fey fernery besmiles domestic woodland:
sainted drollery presumes, where bunnies skip.

Besotted backyard owls growl tenderly
to yearning carrots underneath the sod.

But Anna, passionless the while, invokes
her cedar-hearted muse; and stops before

the serried lentils as before bookstalls
and dreams along a fragrant rue Cascade

as if the sprinklers were a waterfall. Naïve,
her love enthralls frail pigeons and rosettes.

And mute apostrophes to Rosenthal
from Anna's psyche drift toward avenues

where trellised quays appear compositely,
as gay brochures are manifest in dreams.

S M O K E

Love Poem

I think ambition keeps you over-long
at making of what plainly two must be
a digit one in which a half is me.

In labored twain (so horribly a song
this arabic annihilation of
our one-time various uncounted love)

I hear a music that's a visible
disintegration of the foliate rose;
and by that explicable fear in which it froze,

thaws out in ribands to the numeral
irrevocably two, by which I con
what beds and thresholds we have drowsed upon.

ROBERT TALLMAN

Three Panels For A Painted Screen

- I How great a thing it is to stand
 With the legs firm planted, and the hand
 Tightened about a tree. A young tree
 Tugging in the wind, fighting the selfish land
 About its roots. Seen as I have
 The fire fighters straining to hold back
 Their eager water leaping to despoil,
 So can I feel the power leap inside me,
 And the tree's sharp kiss of wind.
 A fool, admitted, I, for all deride me,
 Air, earth, the water and quintescent element.
 Cherish the natural things, young friend,
 And you are sneered at, taking what all the world
 Can have. Take what the world casts by,
 And you have sinned.
- II Flicker, flicker, new green leaves,
 We have a secret shared, you and I.
 I saw you snare the emasculate sickle moon
 In your curious branches.
 I watched your hurt disgust
 As you flung him to the dust.
 I too have had my ultimate cut from me
 With the blade of ripe advice.
- III Ho! Jewel-spattered moth,
 Making a blur in the air.
 Are the hydrangeas bitter
 now they are mature?

MICHAEL TEMPEST

S M O K E

Poem

Facing the night with bitterness remembered

brown statues of the stone nymphs fallen broken
in the deserted garden

the honeysuckle dead

No darkness thick with fireflies and moths
can bring a peace to us forsaken now

Not the flower

the winter stiffened tree

nor moonlight hot upon the garden wall

Ours is a birthright won (no music in
the solitary bird)

only a journey

toward the single star fired with midnight light
and a multitude of voices loud with song

No valediction to the moon

the tree

the pale round eyes within the marble face

but of a singing warm with fields and home
and winged blood that runs along the bones
those who speak with heated tongue

revolt

against the cold and hunger of the years

Songs for these

a world made proud by them

and the quickened speech of love burned on the mouth

WILLARD MAAS

Inertia In A Shaded Garden

Itching Alma, whose chocolate eyes turn
treading among us for an erotic peer—

but not with her, but raw fat strawberries,
served by her, littered on chipped ice
be rough. Let juice not dissuade you.

Lingual birds chop silence nattily.
Alma speaks. We under-hear her for the birds.
She twists, claps hands uproariously in foliage—
yet birds stay-on on limbs in stubborn stupor,
coursing fixed-eyes adrift from flapping hands
to gewgaw wings where frail lice go
oblivious of the (seldom) sure assault of beaks.

And though we know,
who knows sharper than herself her dry
greed needs alleviation by one of us?

Cold berries gone—her eyes turn on—because we shirk.

R. WADE VLIET

Window On A Shore

It is a page, the finger waits, and
the finger covers what was read. No
grey light unburdens the evening
of periphery and shape and gull.

You have not answered, you won't,
so let the pale shells cover what
the cats have slain, and all the ants
dull earth with industry and haste.
But, little tinted walls across
the space of open-mouthed waters, soon
the rains may sidle you unto the shrill
and sudden cognizance of dreams,
a marginal of hasty trees that fringe
on all the parchment melodies
we emptied once in amber streets.

One light, one shadow of light,
one man's inaudible haste, one
voice tilted to say perhaps: only
the dead enrich the acres, the soil,
and only the moldered cause the trees
to bellow into leather leaves. Perhaps
it was not said, perhaps the mouth was dry,
the voice unsheathed. But then
it was night and the cakes we chewed
were sour and every moment late.

S M O K E

Utmost Day

When once I've burned my feet, shall
I so answer: sun you stood where
earth should be. Or say only: feet
you have stumbled where all wings
should swirl past clarity and flame?

Then on till every vein is parched
and all the last reports from earth are cries?
Or is perhaps the consummation swift,
and fleeter that one minute could rebuke
this highest hurt to the defeasible?

This for the old would dry to scars.
In hasty noons to shrugs: that all
brief summers perish unto colds, brief
lights to blacknesses, that all we need to teeth
our partings on are these our tattered dreams.

Or even till the utmost porters of our thoughts
announce aside from final shade: these should
have stayed where henceforth they must lie
with all their pains undone, akin to their recusant
father's own sloughed-off satiety of them?

No, this: when pain is no more anger, that
day to walk aside along the end-detour,
not blaming sun, not scorning feet; but lonely
singing to the father of my goal, who ever did
delay to ripen me against defeat.

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

City Dawn

Hip switching jitteringly past dawn
where notes flung themselves
like hunger-crazed small girls
upon the pavement . . .
where the sheen of bitter lights
mingled with man spit.
They sang, those last ones of night,
their voices thin
shattered by brass . . .
waves of desire creeping past open windows
rich with eyes.
Prying into bundles . . .
the rustle of silk
slithering over frail dreams
and then
the new sun was blotted out by arms
brown-taut
reaching upward . . .
past clouds . . . past an aeroplane . . . to where
the last note of the past darkness writhed
and died of day heat.

ALFRED MORANG

Of Charity

Yet once more before we go into the fire
And through the fire into darkness and through
The darkness into nothingness—yet
Once more let us sing
Believing in spring and desiring it:
The many-rainbowed dew upon stone.
One spot of color knotted in the brain
May drug the cold ventricular machine
And let it sleep. Lift the lid of the skull,
Peer in—this is the region of the mind,
Vain flesh resenting the imperfect
Charity of bone.

Now for awhile,
Feed on neglect of wisdom and forget
The overripened melancholy thought,
That grave which tripped us; it is time
We climbed the mound of skulls and denounced
Support of death—dung-heap at our feet:
Dry, powdered dust of breath to fertilize
One green unending spring.

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

Sin Sanctity Society & So On

In the beginning was some word . . .

Wield you the trenchant pen. Wield you that knife
Which severs silence brooding on desire.
Pride is the stay that corsets our desires;
Pride concentrates the hips on single love.
Go to, my lovely rose, tell her that shines
So distant and so tinkling on cold wind,
That you will muse on absolutes confined
Beneath your hat, that conscious concubines
Have touched a sensate grandeur in firm loins
And keep their youth as long and with more use.

. . . All this for Hecuba, while I, gnawing old bones,
Have no delight to pass away stray time
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on my own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot have this lover,
I'll fallow in fume sunlight, thrusting fins
Of pretense while lone ferments abuse

Yes, yes, go far from me,
Never taste a truth beyond
All imagery of this grainèd mind.
To lose a phallus in a glitter rime,
To quench lust's hollow belly in a dun
Cloud of reasons pro and con,
This is the world, O Calyphas.
This is the world:

To dine with well-bred gestures,
Fondling a fork with trademark of the school;
To spend a decent set of hours that one
May improvise some half-tones on some rule;

S M O K E

Sleep with a body old to questing nails,
Talk of the questions no one can resolve,
Bite on an answer dangling from nowhere,
Smile with satiety when some ancient air
(Of Cimarosa, prithee) exhales *Liebestod*—
And you, no Celia, maybe, swarm before bold lids
That twitch and touch your sure oblivion.
Pride for the nonce. Pride girds the groins
With seemly (no, not too flagrant) caryatids.

HOWARD BLAKE

S M O K E

January Crossing

This is the narrow summit and the wind;
the icy footing; the sick drop of air.

They walk a difficult path flanked by space
which is transparent, horrible and still,
all with insanity of too clear sight before them
hollow along the coming years,
flashing in speech of brother,
glinting in parent's black insomniac eye
then gone—
but always dragging them on
while they remember the walled sunny love
that lit their days and the faces of children
with afternoon gold on March leaves.

These people will die
like rockets and with arms crossed in the snow.
Their eyes will blot with sleep;
their limbs cripple with horror.
Only those who no longer have to keep
drug to mask fear of open space will go
north to exact spring and unmoving star
where safer footings are.

Between wind and the dreams of body changing to ice
these people make their scared random explorations.
Most are past reach of hand. Others keep face
to rock, a few balance with arms outstretched
but gusts of sorrow and fury are dragging them all
always along that pathway which extends
frozen and white, without intrinsic hope.

CLARK MILLS

WALLACE STEVENS

is the author of *Harmonium*.

Agenda

MURIEL RUKEYSER

who is on the staff of the *New Theatre* will have her first volume of poetry published in the Yale Series of Younger Poets this November.

Thousands of Days

LAWRENCE A. HARPER

is editor of *Pollen*.

For the Man on Horseback

ROBERT TALLMAN

currently writes radio dialogues for *The March of Time*.

*Ode on a Familiar Theme, Love Poem,
Anna's Respectful Guidance*

MICHAEL TEMPEST

of Helena, Montana is eighteen.

Three Panels for a Painted Screen

WILLARD MAAS

his volume of poems, *Fire Testament*, was recently published by the Alcestis Press.

Poem

R. WADE VLIET

has appeared in *Poetry*, *Space*, and other magazines.

Inertia in a Shaded Garden

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

is author of *Belly Fulla Straw*.

Window on a Shore, Utmost Day

ALFRED MORANG

of Portland, Maine appears frequently in magazines.

City Dawn

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

recently appeared in the *New Republic's* anthology of eight New England poets.

Of Charity

HOWARD BLAKE

twenty-one years old, has appeared in *Poetry*, *The American Review*, *The New Frontier*

Sin Sanctity Society & so on

CLARK MILLS

has appeared in *Dynamo*, *The Anvil*, and various other magazines.

January Crossing

